

*PYCNOMERUS FULIGINOSUS* ERICHSON  
(COL.: COLYDIIDAE):  
ITS EXPANDING DISTRIBUTION IN SUSSEX

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Shortly after its discovery in Britain in Slapton, Devon in 1962 (Welch, 1964), this small, dull-brown, sluggish beetle was found in a wood-yard in Epping Forest in 1964 (Hunter, 1966). It was flourishing there in 1968 (Allen, 1968) and in the Massee collection at the rooms of the British Entomological and Natural History Society (BENHS) there is a series of nine specimens bearing the label "dead birch, Epping Forest, R. D. Weal, iv,v,vi 1976". Mr. I. McClenaghan exhibited a specimen of *Pycnomerus* at the BENHS annual exhibition in 1981 (McClenaghan 1982) from "under bark outside the timberyard in Epping Forest", which he informs me is the same site from which Mr. Weal's specimens came. Hence, it appears that after being introduced into the wood-yard, *Pycnomerus* has moved (albeit not a great distance) out into the Forest itself. I have not found any other references to captures of this unusual beetle, so it may be of interest to report the localities in Sussex in which I have found it.

I first took *Pycnomerus* under the bark of a fence stake at the entrance to Kingspark Wood, Plaistow, West Sussex on 15.viii.77. There were two specimens, in company with *Abdera quadrifasciata* Curtis and *Melasis buprestoides* (Linnaeus). Two years later on 4.viii.79, I took another specimen from the same fence. On 27.xii.83 I found two examples under the bark of an oak stump near Muddles Green, in central Sussex. Despite the cold weather, they were active and crawled about quite happily across the wood. Exactly one year later, on 27.xii.84 I collected some wet fungus-infected bark from the trunk of a dead but standing oak between Lurgashall and Petworth in West Sussex. Although there was only a small area of bark, it produced a single example of *Pycnomerus*, along with *Trox scaber* (Linnaeus), *Thymalus limbatus* (Fabricius), *Aphodius sphacelatus* (Panzer) and *A. granarius* (Linnaeus).

It is possible that the palings at Kingspark Wood had the beetle in them when they arrived, having come from a wood-yard nearby where the beetle was introduced. The Lurgashall locality is about 4½ miles south-west from Kingspark Wood, but is nowhere near buildings or any recently erected fence. The likelihood of beetles from these localities coming from the same initial source in West Sussex is further supported by the fact that numerous specimens

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have been found in and around Haslemere (just inside Surrey) and Black Down (3½ miles from Lurgashall and 4½ miles from Kingspark Wood) in July of 1984 by Dr. P. Hyman (personal communication, 1985).

On hearing of my intention to publish my records, Mr. P. Hodge informed me that he had also taken *Pycnomerus* several times in the area where I had found it in central Sussex. On 24.v.73 one example was found on an oak log in the wood-yard at Vert Wood, just 1½ miles west of Muddles Green; on three other occasions (16 and 19.ix.74 and 27.ii.77) he took three more specimens. Further, on 30.vii.77 he found two under the bark of an old hornbeam stump in Hale Green only ½ mile north-east of Muddles Green, and five more from the same stump on 4.x.80. Again, it seems that although *Pycnomerus* may have been introduced into the area by the actions of man, it has begun to spread out into the surrounding countryside. In Sussex now there are two centres from which this species is expanding (Figure 1).

When it was first found, *Pycnomerus* was 'the latest recruit to a small but growing band of successful colonists from Australia' (Allen, 1968), but unlike *Euophryum confine* (Broun) and *Aridius* (*Lathridius*) *bifasciatus* (Reitter), has not become anywhere near common. (*Euophryum* and *Aridius* are now almost ubiquitous in Sussex and the Home Counties.) Rather, its spread more resembles that of *Saprosites mendax* Blackburn, another antipodean which until its recent discovery in Richmond Park (Coleopterist's Newsletter, 1982), was restricted to Arundel Park and the neighbouring Rewel Wood. *Pycnomerus* will surely be found in new localities, and I look forward to finding it again, and seeing published records of its colonisation of the country.

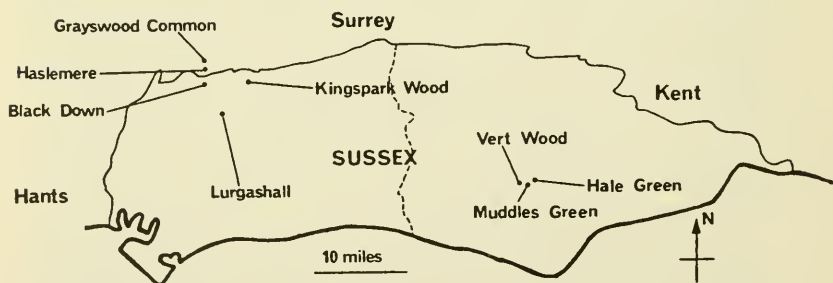


Figure 1. Map of Sussex showing the localities of *Pycnomerus fuliginosus*. These records appear to show two centres from which the beetle is spreading.

## References

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**Canna: The Story of a Hebridean Island** by J. L. Campbell. Pp.i-xviii, 1-323. 16 coloured and 25 black and white illustrations, 3 maps. Hard cover, cloth. Published for the National Trust of Scotland by Oxford University Press. 1984. Price £25.

Dr. J. L. Campbell is well known for his writings on Hebridean butterflies and moths and on those of the Isle of Canna in particular. To this attractively written and well documented history of Canna, there is a series of Appendices, some of which deal with its natural history, notably its Wild Animals and Fish, Birds, Native Trees, Wild Flowers and Geology. However, perhaps of most interest to readers of the *Record*, is Appendix XIII: the author's "Butterflies and Moths of Canna", based on his list "Macro-Lepidoptera Canna" with additions (in *Ent. Rec.*, **82**:211-214, 235-242, 292-299; **83**: 6-12; **84**:196-198; **87**:10-12) and the account of the Microlepidoptera by Drs. Harper and Young (in *Ent. Rec.*, **93**:150-153).

The author touches on the interesting question of two-way movements of two regular migrants to Canna (a subject treated by him in some detail in *Entomologist*, **84**:1-6). Practically every summer, *Cynthia cardui* L. and *Vanessa atalanta* L. migrate to the Isle, where they produce a generation of butterflies and there are strong indications that the latter then fly south. In 1949, approximately 300 *C. cardui* and 100 *V. atalanta* bred from wild larvae collected on Canna were marked with blue cellulose paint and released on the Isle. Several correspondents in England and Scotland claimed to have observed such butterflies, but scientific proof of the southerly movement was lacking owing to the failure to capture any of the marked specimens. — J.M.C.-H.